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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

HARRY READ, Director of Information and Publications (217) 581-2820

April 26, 1985

Local

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URBANA, IL--In testimony prepared for delivery at hearings on reauthorization of the U.S. Higher Education Act in Urbana on Saturday (April 27), President Stanley Rives said "Eastern Illinois University takes the position that provision of adequate student financial aid should be the highest priority of the Act."

Rives said "if this nation can afford no other form of financial support of higher education than adequate assistance to students...then let reauthorization focus on that issue alone."

The president said "This nation can and should do better in support of other programs contained in the Act, but nothing is more important than direct assistance to students."

Scheduled to hear the testimony was the House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education and the Committee on Education and Labor.

Two-thirds of Eastern's students, according to Rives, receive some form of financial aid from the University, the state, or the federal government.

The average annual family income of Illinois State Scholarship Commission applicants is \$21,400, and 26 percent of the students receive some form of federal assistance.

"It is very clear," said Rives, "that even with our relatively low costs many of our students would not be able to obtain their college education without financial assistance."

Rives also said the presidents of all Illinois members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities believe that increased attention should be given to grants to avoid over-reliance on loans.

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Higher Education

Add 1

The AASCU group further believes, the president said, that attention should be given to indexing Pell grants to the higher education price index "to avoid further decline in the percentage of total costs covered by those grants."

In the prepared testimony, Rives noted that "the wisest and best investment a society can make toward its continued viability is an investment in the development of its human resources through education."

He added that "a good educational system is essential to national political as well as economic viability."

"These are the fundamental reasons," Rives said, "why your work toward reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is vital to the future of our nation."